

“God So Loved The World” Bible Study

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NIV)

Study #6: What Must I Do to Be Saved?

In our last five studies we not only realized how sinful we are and how impossible it is to save ourselves, but we also discovered that God’s love for us sinners is infinite and unconditional, which He demonstrated by the death of His Son on the cross. As a result, God has obtained for all mankind salvation full and complete in Christ’s holy history. This is what makes the gospel fantastic or incredible good news! Now, in this study, we are going to answer a question, which may be in your mind: how can this wonderful salvation become mine? In other words, what must I do to be saved?

Because God created mankind with a free will, He will not force on anyone the gift of salvation He has accomplished for all humanity in Christ. While it is true that *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son*, the fact is *only those who believe will not perish but have eternal life*. The good news of the gospel demands a human response in order to make Christ’s accomplished salvation for all mankind individually effective. According to the Bible, that human response is described by the word *faith*. Thus, when we combine the good news of salvation, which God has obtained for all humanity in Christ, with our individual faith response, we have this wonderful truth called *Justification by Faith*. Let us see what the Bible has to teach about this wonderful truth.

1. What great commission did Jesus give His disciples before He returned to heaven?

Mark 16:15 _____

2. What did He say would happen to: (a) those who believed the gospel and were baptized, and (b) those who did not believe the gospel?

Mark 16:16 (a) _____

(b) _____

Note: The only reason anyone is lost is because of a deliberate and persistent rejection of the gospel. God does not blame us for being sinners, since we are born sinful, but He does hold us responsible if we deliberately and ultimately reject His gift of salvation in Christ (see also John 3:18, 36).

3. What did Jesus say will happen to those who believe in God and Jesus whom He sent to save the world?

John 5:24 _____

4. How does the apostle Paul describe this salvation that is received by faith apart from our law keeping?

Romans 3:28 _____

Note: In the Bible, Justification by faith is God’s way of saving sinners in contrast to salvation by works of the law, which is man’s way of saving himself.

5. Will anyone be saved by keeping the law?

Galatians 2:16 _____

6. What part does the law play when it comes to our justification by faith?

Galatians 3:24 _____

Note: The Greek word Paul used for “school master,” “tutor,” or “guardian” was *pedagogai*. This was an entrusted slave who was responsible to take his master’s children to their private tutor. So also, Paul says, while the law itself does not save us, one of its functions is to bring us sinners to Christ so that we may be justified by faith.

7. What does the judge do when a person is found righteous or not guilty in a court case?

Deuteronomy 25:1 _____

Note: The word “justify” or “justification” is a legal term and is applied only to those who are found righteous or not guilty. It is the very opposite of “condemnation,” which is the verdict for sinners or those who are found guilty.

8. What is the first thing that one must have in order to have faith in Jesus?

Romans 10:17 _____

Note: A knowledge of the gospel is the first prerequisite to have saving faith. It is for this reason Jesus said, “you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” By “truth” He meant the truth about Himself (John 8:32, 36; see also John 17:3). It is this truth we covered in lessons 3 and 4.

9. What is the second thing that one must do to make salvation effective?

John 6:40 _____

Note: Having a knowledge of the gospel is not enough, one has to believe or accept it. The Jewish nation of Paul’s day heard the gospel but not all of them believed it. Those who refused to believe will be lost (see Romans 10:16,18). Jesus made it clear that only those who believe in Him will be saved (see John 3:18; 5:24; 11:25).

10. Belief in the gospel involves more than merely a mental assent to truth. What is the third requirement to have genuine faith that saves?

Romans 6:17 _____

Note: The Bible is clear that true saving faith is more than a belief or mere mental assent to the gospel. According to James, the devils believe but certainly do not possess saving faith (see James 2:19). Faith requires a *heart obedience* to the gospel (see Romans 1:5; Galatians 5:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; Hebrews 5:9; 1 Peter 4:17). Just as faith is a heart obedience to the truth of the gospel, unbelief is a deliberate rejection of, or disobeying the gospel. Therefore, we are saved by faith and lost by unbelief.

11. What does it mean to obey the gospel?

Note: Keep in mind, the gospel is what God did to you in Christ ([lesson 3](#)). By joining us to Christ in the incarnation, God made it possible for Christ to re-write our history so that by his perfect life and His sacrificial death we stand complete in Him (Colossians 2:10). To obey the gospel therefore means that we surrender our wills to this truth and accept Christ's life as our life and His death as our death. Such faith obedience means we must confess with Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20). Since Christ is the same "yesterday, today, and forever," He will produce in the believers, that perfect life that He lived (see John 14:12). The good works produced will be in harmony with the law of God and while they do not save us, they are the evidence or fruits of salvation (Galatians 5:22, 23).

12. What clear statement does the Old Testament make concerning the just—those who have accepted the righteousness of Christ?

Habakkuk 2:4 _____

13. In contrast to the Jews, how did the Gentiles obtain righteousness?

Romans 9:30 _____

14. In spite of much effort on their part, why did Israel fail to attain to the righteousness that saves?

Romans 9:31, 32 _____

15. What did it cost the apostle Paul, who was a Jew and a Pharisee before his conversion, to obtain the righteousness of God that comes by faith?

Philippians 3:7-9 _____

Note: It is impossible to be saved by faith in Christ and still hold on to our own righteousness. We are saved by justification by faith alone and nothing else. While we are not saved by faith plus works, genuine justification by faith always produces works as evidence of our salvation (see Ephesians 2:8-10).

16. What happens when a believer tries to add works of the law as a contribution towards justification by faith?

Galatians 5:4 _____

Note: Any believer who has tried to add his or her own good works as a contribution to their salvation, will forfeit salvation altogether. By accepting the righteousness of Christ, we must admit our own total depravity. Thus, we cannot add our own good works which falsely implies our being good. The gospel will not allow salvation partly of Christ and partly of us. Salvation is totally through Christ's righteousness alone.

17. Since we are saved by grace alone, through faith in Christ's righteousness, does this mean that we can live as we please, since our works do not count towards our salvation?

Galatians 5:13, 14 _____

18. Why is it that salvation by grace alone, through justification by faith, does not give us the license to sin?

Romans 6:1, 2 _____

Note: If faith means we have obeyed the gospel from the heart, then it means we must consider ourselves dead to sin and alive unto God, since that is what is true of Christ (see verses 10 & 11). And since God is the source of righteousness in Christ, it is through our faith obedience that we choose that righteousness.

19. What other reason does Paul give why believers, who are justified by faith, cannot condone sinning?

Romans 6:15-18 _____

Note: Sin and righteousness belong to opposite camps. When we obey the gospel, we are not only saying good-bye to death, the wages of sin, but also to sin itself. In exchange we have chosen a life of righteousness. This is the true meaning of repentance. However, this does not mean we will not fall in our Christian walk. But it does mean we have chosen to live a life of righteousness in our minds.

20. What happens when a true Christian, who has turned from sin, falls and commits a sin?

1 John 2:1 _____

Note: A Christian does not become unjustified or lost every time he or she falls. Yes, every sin we commit, no matter how small, contributed to the death of Christ. That is why a true believer will hate sin for what it did to their beloved Saviour. Such a person will confess that sin, based on a heart appreciation for Christ and not based on fear of punishment.

21. What is the immediate blessing that comes to those justified by faith?

Romans 5:1 _____

Note: This peace for those who have been justified by faith is expressed by Paul in the present continuous tense. This means that as long as we are believers in Christ and stand under the umbrella of justification by faith, we continue to have peace with God. But note, this peace is a vertical peace between us sinners and our Holy God. We may not have peace in the world we live in, but our hearts rejoice because we have a future hope that the world cannot take away from us, as long as we believe.

22. Besides peace, what two other blessings do those who have been justified by faith have access to?

Romans 5:2 (i) _____

(ii) _____

Note: Access to God's grace here means the power or strength of God which makes it possible for believers to live the Christian life and fulfill God's purpose for them. While the primary meaning of grace is God's wonderful gift of salvation to sinful man, something we do not deserve, grace also means God's power or strength which he makes available to those who are justified by faith (see 1 Cor. 15:9,10; 2 Cor 12:7-9). Such grace makes it possible for us to manifest the love of God. This is the hope of true Christianity, since sin has robbed us of it (see Romans 3:23; 2 Cor. 3:17, 18).